

help educate people on these issues. What we must do instead is educate our children early. We can teach them to have opinions, and teach them why they can't read that book, or why they shouldn't read that book. As time passes, they will be able to handle the issues, before being offended. Also, they will be able to personally ban books, TV with the V-chip and movies with the rating system.

There's no "cut and dried" solution to this. If a case in book banning or any other censorship were to reach the Supreme Court, they can interpret the First Amendment. Or if two-thirds of each House vote in Congress, they could rewrite the First Amendment more specifically. And on a more local level, if two-thirds of all state legislatures wanted to, they could call an actual Convention and rewrite it themselves.

Thank you for inviting me, and I hope something can be done on this issue.

Congressman Sanders: Thank you very much, Matthew. Matthew, let me ask you a question, because you have dealt with a very sensitive and controversial issue. So, here's my question: if at town meeting, or better yet a school board meeting, a parent gets up and says, "I read this book. It is vulgar, it has filthy words in it, it has ideas that I don't want my daughter to see; I want that book out of the library." You're a member of the school board—how do you respond to that?

Answer: Tell her that we can ban the book, in a sense, ban by putting it in, maybe, a section, like an adult section or a high school section. This happened at my old school, as a matter of fact, and they did not remove it from the library, and just put it in a separate section. What happened, was a 5th grader was basically in the high school section, reading this book. And I would ask them to educate . . . their kids, and I would ask the teachers also need to educate their kids on why they shouldn't read that book at that age.

Congressman Sanders: In your judgment, what is the danger of somebody defining a book and saying, "This book is terrible, I want it out." What are the long-term repercussions of that approach?

Answer: With these books that I've brought—these are classics, these are used in teaching. If we lose these books, we lose a valuable tool in teaching our youth.

Congressman Sanders: So what you're saying is that what may be vulgar for one person may be a work of art and a classic for somebody else.

Answer: That's right.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH MAY 21, 1996

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 29, 1996

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to observe Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and to recognize the many contributions Americans of Asian and Pacific ancestry have made to our Nation.

May was selected as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month because several significant events took place in May that impacted the Asian Pacific community, events such as: the first Japanese immigrants arrival to the United States—May 27, 1869; the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad were joined at Promontory, UT, of which 90 percent of the track from Sacramento to Prom-

ontory was laid by Chinese workers—May 10, 1869; passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the first U.S. immigration law to discriminate on the basis of race—May 8, 1882; and the Alien Land Law was signed in California prohibiting Asians from buying land—May 19, 1913.

America has been enriched by the many contributions and achievements of the Asian Pacific community. We have all benefited from their struggles, their labor, and their achievement. From the railroads and bridges that were built to the works of art, music, and literature, Asian Pacific American contributions to the United States have been innumerable. For example, the most visited monument in Washington DC, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, was designed by a Chinese-American, Maya Lin; the youngest person to win the French Tennis Open is Michael Chang; and the inventor of Playdoh is a Chinese-American.

In addition, Asian and Pacific Island Americans have fought and died in defense of our country. The most highly decorated infantry troop in our country during World War II was the 442d Infantry Battalion, a troop comprised entirely of Japanese-Americans.

Asian Pacific Americans' accomplishments not only symbolize our rich and diverse heritage, but also highlights shared ideals and unity in a common quest for freedom and dignity.

In the midst of extensive discrimination, both social and legislative, APA's have managed not only to survive, but to build communities and to carry on their rich heritage. Asian Pacific Americans have enriched our country's unique diversity and strengthened us as a Nation.

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 29, 1996

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate May as Older Americans Month. This month is a special time to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by the senior citizens of this Nation, and to recognize their special needs. It is also a time to bring age-related issues to the forefront of America's attention. The population of this country is growing older at an unprecedented rate. By the year 2050, one in five Americans will be over 65 years of age. Older Americans Month gives us an opportunity to think about how we must plan to meet the needs of the rapidly growing number of our Nation's senior citizens.

At the forefront of the issues concerning older Americans is the current debate over the so-called reform of Medicare. Medicare currently provides over 90 percent of Americans over the age of 65 with quality health insurance benefits. There is no private insurance plan in the country that offers the wide range of benefits and affordable care that the Federal Medicare Program provides. Yet in their proposed budget plan, Republicans still want to cut \$167 billion in Medicare and \$72 billion in Medicaid. These cuts are unprecedented, and would have a devastating impact on today's older Americans, as well as destroying

the options of future retiring citizens. Seniors would be forced into private managed care programs which are proven to be more restrictive and make money by denying care. While essential Federal health care benefits will be sacrificed, these cuts are planned to provide tax breaks for the wealthy.

The Republican proposal would abandon the needs of older Americans rather than meet them. This month, and in the months to come, let us recognize the senior citizens of this country, not by cutting their benefits and threatening their future, but by giving them hope in maintaining their health and security.

STATEMENT BY ACACIA FANTO REGARDING THE FINANCING OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 29, 1996

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of my colleagues I would like to have printed in the RECORD this statement by Acacia Fanto, a high school student from Brattleboro, VT, who was speaking at my recent town meeting on issues facing young people.

My name is Acacia Fanto, and my topic is property tax funding of public school education.

Primary funding of public school education through property tax is inherently unfair. There are huge differences in property wealth from district to district. Based on this funding system . . . unequal from one area to another. The amount of money spent on education is a significant factor in determining the quality of education. Money is necessary to hire good teachers, buy the latest textbooks, get the latest classroom equipment, and attract good administrators. Despite this, cuts are prevalent everywhere. The biggest cuts are in arts, extracurricular activities and technology.

If money is a significant factor of a good education, and money is the biggest variable from one public school to another, then education quality is not equal in this country. The differences from one district to another are astonishing. There are tremendous disparities based on where you live. The property tax funding system is making it difficult for many areas to meet even basic educational needs, at a time when more and more money is needed for special programs. We need these programs in schools to deal with the problems of today, such as violence, teen pregnancy and broken families. All these necessities take money away from academic programs.

Property tax funding of public school education is not only unfair, but also a regressive funding system, one that often turns homeowners against schools because they don't want, or can't afford, to have their property taxes raised. The property tax funding system is unfair, unequal and ineffective, so alternatives need to be sought. The Robin Hood plan shifts money from wealthy districts to poorer ones, to try to equalize funding. This plan turns the "haves" against the "have-nots," and injects race and class into the equity funding fight. A statewide property tax, or income tax, could turn the problem from a local funding issue to a state one. These solutions would decrease inequalities within a state, but not within the country.

An alternative to the property tax funding system which would provide consistency, and would eliminate the unfairness, inequalities, and the opposition between the "haves" and

the "have-nots," would be a federal progressive income tax system. People would be taxed based on a percentage of their income, then the money raised would be distributed fairly among the districts by the federal government.

In the search for a fair alternative, the first step that needs to be taken is to change America's attitude towards education. Education needs to be valued by this society in order to demonstrate its value to its youth. When money is spent on education, its value shines through, and creates a positive outcome in the future. We need to be able to put the funding issue behind us, so that the issue can become how to deliver best education possible. Instead of working to help the people, government is working against us, at a time when America is trying to create an educational system which responds to the future needs of America's youth. The government passed cuts in education, while at the same time approving bigger budgets for construction of prisons. Government needs to take a look at the long term effect of what it cuts and what it supports. If would support our youth, keep them in school and educate them, we may not have such growing need for prisons.

Equal opportunity is the basis of this country's ideals, but by looking at our schools, you wouldn't know it. This unfair educational system is based on the unequal distribution of money in our schools caused by the property tax funding system. The U.S. has created a caste system of public education that is increasingly separate and unequal. We must work to make this a country of equal opportunity.

TRIBUTE TO RABBI LANE STEINGER

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 29, 1996

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rabbi Lane Steinger who is retiring after 20 years of dedicated service as Rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Oak Park, MI.

For the past 20 years, Rabbi Steinger has not only served as a spiritual leader and teacher to his congregation, but he has distinguished himself as a community activist. He has volunteered as a chaplain at William Beaumont Hospital and has served on a myriad of boards including the Christian-Muslim-Jewish Leadership Forum of the Greater Detroit Interfaith Round Table, Interns for Peace Rabbinical Board, the Cranbrook Peace Foundation, Michigan Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, Jewish Resettlement Service, Jewish Federation Apartments, JARC, Jewish Vocational Service, and the Michigan League for Human Services.

But most importantly, Rabbi Steinger will be remembered for his warmth, compassion, and caring. He will be sorely missed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Rabbi Steinger's accomplishments and years of service to the congregation of Temple Emanu-El and the greater metropolitan Detroit area. I send Rabbi Steinger and his wife, Linda, and children, Shira, Daina, and Rafi, my very best wishes as they return home to St. Louis, MO, where Rabbi Steinger will assume the position of Director of the Midwest Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

TRIBUTE TO AARON PICKERING

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 29, 1996

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Mr. Aaron Pickering for being named as the first place winner in the 1996 Voice of Democracy program and recipient of the Selman Memorial Scholarship Award. This indeed is a great honor and one which Aaron should be very proud to receive.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary sponsor the Voice of Democracy audio-essay scholarship competition. The program is now in its 49th year and requires high school student entrants to write and record a 3- to 5-minute essay on an announced patriotic theme. "Answering America's Call" is this year's theme, and over 116,000 student participated in the program nationwide.

It is an honor for the second district and the entire State of Tennessee to be the home of the first-place winner, Aaron Pickering. Aaron is a senior at Halls High School. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pickering.

Aaron is an exceptional young man. In addition to receiving the Selman Scholarship Award, he has received numerous awards and honors for his endeavors. America needs more young men like Aaron to strengthen our Nation and secure its future. He is a well-rounded young man who has a bright future ahead of him.

I request that a copy of Aaron's winning essay "Answering America's Call" be placed in the RECORD at this point so that I can call it to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD.

ANSWERING AMERICA'S CALL

(By Aaron Pickering)

It's not often that a simple story changes your view of democracy, but I would like to relate one to you that did just that for me. One day in a social studies class a few years ago we were discussing the upcoming student government elections. Some of the students who had been elected to office the previous year began to complain about how the student body treats SGA members. The general consensus seemed to be that students who did not vote in SGA elections did not have the right to complain when things went wrong. That concept seemed fair to me, after all, I always voted in the elections and never openly complained about anything SGA was doing.

Amidst all this commotion, my teacher stood up. We all expected him to join in on the attack. We were all in for a shock.

He immediately started into a story. Once he had a class in which a girl named Jennifer, the SGA president, was invited into as a special speaker. Jennifer was an outstanding student. She had won the election by a landslide. When the class began she gave an impressive speech about her many ambitions and hopes for student government that year. The class gave her a powerful round of applause. Jennifer basked in the glory for a few moments and then she headed for the door. My teacher stopped her and turned to the class, "Does anyone have a question for their new president?" The class just sat there with blank stares. My teacher asked again, "doesn't anyone have a question for their new president?" A hand slowly rose in the back of the room. It belonged to a young man named Ralph. Everyone stared in

amazement; Ralph never said anything in class, he just sat back there, asleep all the time. Ralph stood up and asked Jennifer what SGA was going to do about the horrible lines in the lunchroom. Ralph explained how he had only 30 minutes at lunch and he had to spend 20 of those waiting in line to get his food. Jennifer responded with a simple "we're working on it." Ralph wasn't satisfied. He went on to propose a system where different classes would go to lunch on a staggered schedule to prevent congestion in the lines. At this point Jennifer was furious. She yelled at Ralph, "What right do you have to complain about anything, Ralph? You never do anything, you just sit back there and sleep. You didn't vote in the election, so you don't have any say in what we do!"

My teacher rang in, "Oh yes he does. Jennifer, I'm disappointed in you. You are the president of the entire student body; you represent them—all of them—in the student government. It doesn't matter if Ralph voted in the election or not, you are his president and he has every right to complain about problems and offer you his opinion on how they can be fixed." Jennifer stormed out of the room in anger.

A few months later Ralph's plan for an improved lunch schedule was implemented and the next year Ralph was elected president of the student body.

My entire class sat in silence. I had never thought of it that way; all of this time I had been content to simply vote. But now I realized that voting is only a small part of our duty as citizens. This situation took place in a simple high school government but as I have grown older and can now vote in real local, state and federal elections, the message of the story has never been more important. We elect officials who represent us and they need to know what we are thinking. It is their duty to listen to us and use our opinions to guide their actions. It's a basic concept of representative democracy; we can't have a government of, by, and for the people unless we, the people actively participate in the process.

Ralph answered America's call. He stood up and made his opinion known. He shaped the policy of his school. More of us need to take a lesson from Ralph. We can't simply vote and then sit back until the next election. We have to be in contact with our representatives and let them know what we think. Our elected officials are public servants and their job is just that—to serve the public. But they can't serve us unless they know what we want them to do. We must speak up. That is America's call—a call that it makes on each and every citizen, a call that if left unanswered would cause our nation to cease to exist. It will be a glorious day when every American can say that he or she plays an active role in government; it is only then that the American system will reach its full potential—it is only then that America's call will be answered.

STATEMENT BY PEOPLES ACADEMY STUDENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 29, 1996

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of my colleagues I would like to have printed in the RECORD this statement by Kara von Behren, Sara Reeve, Anna Laszewski, and Alison Gingras, students from Peoples Academy in Vermont. They were speaking at my